

Please amend the specification at page 11, line 37, and at the top of page 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- **Figure 4** - A diagram indicating multiple alignments of the nucleotide sequence of the replication origins of various plasmids. --

Please amend the specification at page 12, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- **Figure 5** - A diagram indicating multiple DNA sequence alignments of the regions containing the origin of transfer of various plasmids. --

Please amend the specification at page 12, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- **Figure 6** - A schematic diagram showing a circular representation of the symbiotic plasmid pNGR234a of NGR234. --

REMARKS

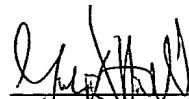
This paper is being filed in response to a Notice to File Corrected Application Papers dated January 18, 2002. Entry of the Sequence Listing is respectfully requested. No new matter is added hereby. Also accompanying this Preliminary Amendment are corrected drawings Figures 1 through 6.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and Sequence Listing. The attached page is captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Sequence Listing:

Please insert attached pages 1-273 containing the Sequence Listing.

In the Specification:

Please cancel Figure 3 without prejudice.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at line 33 of page 11 as follows:

Figure [3] 4- A schematic diagram showing the map of the 20 sequenced cosmids covering the 536 kb symbiotic plasmid pNGR234a of *Rhizobium* sp. NGR234.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at line 37 of page 11, and at the top of page 12 as follows:

Figure [4] 5- A diagram indicating multiple alignments of the nucleotide sequence of the replication origins of various plasmids.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3 of page 12 as follows:

Figure [5] 6 - A diagram indicating multiple DNA sequence alignments of the regions containing the origin of transfer of various plasmids.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at line 7 of page 12 as follows:

Figure [6] 7 - A schematic diagram showing a circular representation of the symbiotic plasmid pNGR234a of NGR234.